



Montana Association of Counties

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2715 SKYWAY DRIVE, SUITE A, HELENA, MT 59602

(406) 449-4360 Fax (406) 442-5238

www.mtcounties.org

September 15, 2014

Senator Tom Facey, Chair
Education & Local Government Interim Committee
418 Plymouth St.
Missoula, MT 59801-4133

Dear Chair Facey and Members of the Education & Local Government Interim Committee,

On behalf of the Montana Association of Counties, we are writing to express our support of Montana State Fire Chiefs Association's proposed solution to allow the Governor to immediately respond to emerging incidents by broadening the scope of 10-3-310, MCA. In doing this, we will be able expedite deployment of resources to assist with emerging incidents across the state.

As the MCA is currently written, the State is encumbered by the local jurisdiction going through the disaster declaration process, to include the 2 mill emergency assessment, which must be made by a unanimous vote of the governing body, before engaging. If one of the members is gone, it cannot be done until that member returns or is contacted to let that person "vote." By that point in time, many situations have grown from a minor emergency to a major disaster, therefore increasing costs to everyone, particularly the state.

With the ability for the state to initiate a response earlier in a disaster, prior to a 2-mill levy being approved by the local jurisdiction, many of the disasters may be reduced in scope, thereby reducing the total costs. As expressed above, it is currently difficult to rapidly commit funds towards mitigating incidents while they are emerging.

It must be noted that there is no additional money being requested, but rather the bill would allow a quicker state response using existing funding.

If you have questions or need additional clarification, please do not hesitate to call me directly at 406-449-4360.

Sincerely,

Shantil M. Siaperas
Legislative Analyst & Communications Specialist
Montana Association of Counties
(Office) 406.449.4360
macoleg@mtcounties.org | www.mtcounties.org

CC: Leanne Kurtz, Legislative Services Division

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Education and Local Government
September 16, 2014

Exhibit 7